alliance québec

COMMUNIQUÉ

Alliance Quebec states the case for institutions under s. 113(f)

"Minorities shouldn't have to prove majority status"

MONTREAL, January 18, 1993 -- Alliance Quebec President Robert Keaton today urged Quebecers to understand the need for changes to the restrictions that govern publicly-funded institutions serving the English-speaking Quebec community.

"We believe the time has come for all Quebecers to ask themselves one simple and fundamental question," Keaton stated. "Does the English-speaking community have a place in the Province of Quebec?

"If so, our institutions are an essential component of our ability to maintain our community. We need to be able to maintain and develop those institutions, for the benefit of all Quebecers. Section 113(f) is an essential part of the formula for survival."

Keaton remarked that the criteria for the exceptional use of a language other than French by hospitals, social services institutions, school boards and municipalities are simply too onerous.

"According to the rules under which the *Office de la langue française* operates, in order for an institution to be accorded status as a minority institution, it must prove that an absolute majority of its clients are of another language community. If that community status falls below 50% plus one, the 113(f) status may be withdrawn.

"So, in order to be seen in law as a minority institution, the **minority** community **must prove that it is a majority** within that institution. We must see this situation as an extraordinary threshold to cross."

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Keaton called for proper understanding of the rules governing s. 113 (f) status. "All that 113(f) status does is grant permission to institutions to use another language in their title, to have internal communication in another language and to employ individuals whose French may be less than perfect. Services in French still are assured to the public. So is all communication with government."

Keaton told a news conference that the English-speaking community of Quebec is vitally interested in the question that has been raised about the minority language institutions in the current debate. "It is the view of the English-speaking community that the institutions that serve it are its bedrock.

He added that, over generations, the community had built up institutions that serve the whole of Quebec. He called for a commitment by the government to assuring that the respect for the institutions of the English-speaking community by making it easier to get 113(f) status and by ensuring that once it is obtained, it is not open to challenge on the basis of demographic shifts.

- 30 -

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